

*Jax-in-a-Box* was first presented by SkyPilot Theatre Company of Los Angeles (www.skypilottheatre.com) on September 21, 2013, at Determined to Succeed L.A. (www.dtsla.org), under the direction of Nicole B. Adkins, with the following cast:

JACKSON: Jason Kobielus  
DARIUS: Jude Evans

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### CHARACTERS

DARIUS: 14 to 18, an older brother.

JACKSON: 12 to 16, a younger brother.

### TIME

The present. Around lunchtime.

### SETTING

A few blocks away from the school.

*Lights go up on a large cardboard box. Enter DARIUS, dribbling a basketball. He notices the box, decides to ignore it, at first. After a while, though, he dribbles closer.*

DARIUS: Is that you, Jax?

JACKSON: From inside the box. Go away.

DARIUS: What are you doing?

JACKSON: I said, "Keep walking!"

DARIUS: Aren't you supposed to be in school?

JACKSON: Aren't you?

DARIUS *dribbles in silence.*

DARIUS: Does your mom know you're in a box?

JACKSON: What do you care? You're not my brother no more.

DARIUS: No, but I bet your mom'd care if she found out you was cuttin' class. *Pause for effect.* Might even give me a reward for turning you in.

JACKSON: I'm not going back to that school!

DARIUS: I hear that.

JACKSON: Ever.

DARIUS: I thought you liked school.

JACKSON: Who told you that?

DARIUS: You get good grades.

JACKSON: Ha!

DARIUS: Better than I get.

JACKSON: That basketball gets better grades than you get.

**JEFF GOODE**

**DARIUS:** Don't make me come in there, Jackson.

**JACKSON:** The only thing I like about that school is from now until three o'clock, everyone in the world that hates me is inside that building. And as long as I stay out of it, they can't get me.

**DARIUS:** Kids pickin' on you again?

**JACKSON:** Again? They don't stop, Darius!

**DARIUS:** So how do you think it's gonna go if they see you hiding in a box?

**JACKSON:** They can't see me, if I'm in here. That's the point, stupid.

**DARIUS:** You gotta watch your mouth.

**JACKSON:** The only thing they're gonna see is some idiot skippin' class so he can talk to a box.

**DARIUS:** All right, that's it, you're comin' out!

*DARIUS plunges his hand into the box. And quickly pulls it back out.*

Ow! You cut me!

**JACKSON:** I scratched you. Don't be a baby.

**DARIUS:** I'll show you who's a baby!  
He plunges both hands in the box. And just as quickly pulls them back out.

Ow! Knock it off!

**JACKSON:** I'm not comin' out!

**DARIUS:** Fine, stay in there.

**JACKSON:** I will!

**DARIUS:** You need to cut your fingernails.

**JACKSON:** I did. And then I sharpened them.

**DARIUS:** You what?? Why'd you do that?

**JACKSON:** Cuz it's the only thing keeps people from grabbin' at me.

**DARIUS:** That's stupid.

**JACKSON:** You gonna stick your hand in here again?

**DARIUS:** No.

**JACKSON:** Then it's working.

*DARIUS dribbles, considers leaving.*

**DARIUS:** You can't stay in there forever, Jackson.

**JACKSON:** Not forever. Just until I graduate high school.

**DARIUS:** You're not gonna graduate if you don't come outta your box.

**JACKSON:** All I need is a D-minus.

**DARIUS:** Everybody hates school, Jax, but we all gotta go. You think I like it in school?

**JACKSON:** You don't like it cuz you're bad at it. I don't like it cuz they all want me dead.

**DARIUS:** What? Nobody wants you dead.

**JACKSON:** Then I don't know where I heard it.

**DARIUS:** You think the whole school's tryin' to kill you?

**JACKSON:** I didn't say that. I said they want me to die. They say it to my face.

**DARIUS:** They don't say you should die.

**JACKSON:** And send me links to suicide kids like I should take a hint.

**DARIUS:** You're makin' that up.

**JACKSON:** I'm not makin' it up, Darius! Just cuz you don't wanna see it, don't mean it's not happenin'! That's why they do it.

Darius! Cuz they think you're okay with it.

**DARIUS:** I never said it was okay.

**JACKSON:** No, you don't have to say nothin'. Just stand there and watch. *Pause.* Be nice if somebody had my back.

**DARIUS:** So all this is cuz you're afraid to go to school?

**JACKSON:** I'm not afraid!

**DARIUS:** You're hidin' in a box.

**JACKSON:** I tried to go. I can't. I get sick to my stomach.

**DARIUS:** You get sick being at school?

**JACKSON:** It's like I can't breathe. My hands start shaking. I tried to go today and I had to throw up in the parking lot.

DARIUS: Aw, no, yuck. Did anybody see you?

JACKSON: I don't know. I ran away.

DARIUS: Well, I guess you did the right thing. You don't want people finding out about that.

JACKSON: And the farther away I ran, the better I felt. Until I got here and I crawled in this box. And now I'm fine. As long as I stay in here, I'm fine.

DARIUS: You're not fine. You're in a box. This isn't fine.

JACKSON: It's quiet. There's nobody here to tell me what they think of me.

DARIUS: You gotta come outta there sometime, Jax. Look, you don't see me skippin' school just cuz I don't keep up in my classes. And all my teachers ridin' me cuz I can't get the same grades as my little brother.

JACKSON *pokes his head out of the box for the first time.*

JACKSON: *Suspicious.* You're right. You don't care about any of that.

DARIUS: That's what I'm sayin'.

JACKSON: So why are you here?

DARIUS: What?

JACKSON: You don't care what anybody thinks of you or me or your grades. So why are you outta school?

DARIUS: I'm not. I came looking for you.

JACKSON: No, you didn't.

DARIUS: Your mom sent me.

JACKSON: Why don't you call her, then? Tell her you found me.

DARIUS: I don't know her number.

JACKSON: You're here cuz you skipped outta school. What are you up to? If they sent you to mess with me, I'll scratch you.

DARIUS: Now, stop it! Nobody sent me.

JACKSON: I'm callin' my mom.

DARIUS: All right, stop . . . Look, I accidentally . . . I accidentally asked out the wrong girl, okay?

JACKSON: What wrong girl?

DARIUS: Shaundra Kelly.

JACKSON: Ha! That's never gonna happen!

DARIUS: Thanks, bro.

JACKSON: So what did she say?

DARIUS: What do you think she said?

JACKSON: I think she smacked you and told you to step off.

DARIUS: She told me she'd think about it.

JACKSON: Ha! You're such an idiot! That means "no."

DARIUS: She said she'd talk to me at lunch.

JACKSON: It's almost lunchtime now. What're you doing here?

DARIUS: I'm not goin' in that cafeteria.

JACKSON: Why not?

DARIUS: Cuz you're right, all right? It's never gonna happen. And I don't need her laughin' at me in front of all her friends.

JACKSON: That would be funny.

DARIUS: Watch it.

JACKSON: You gotta eat some time, Darius.

DARIUS: I hafta cut weight for track anyway.

JACKSON: So you're afraid of a girl.

DARIUS: No, I'm not.

JACKSON: You're not in school, cuz you're afraid of a little girl.

DARIUS: You shut up. Come out of there.

*He tries to grab JACKSON, who ducks back down in the box.*

Ow! Stop scratching!

JACKSON: Stop grabbing!

DARIUS *glares at the box. From inside the box:*  
So what are you gonna do? Drop out of school?

DARIUS: I wish.

JACKSON: Over Shaundra Kelly?

DARIUS: Well, I can't now.

JACKSON: Yeah, your dad'll kill you, missing class over nothing.

**JEFF GOODE**

**DARIUS:** Forget that. Your mom'll kill me if she thinks I gave you the idea.

*JACKSON emerges again.*

**JACKSON:** Hey, that's right. That's exactly what she's gonna think if she finds out.

**DARIUS:** You better not be getting any ideas.

**JACKSON:** I could stay here all week and not get in trouble if she thought you put me up to it.

**DARIUS:** You better not.

**JACKSON:** Oh, man, and your dad would hear it.

**DARIUS:** You try it and you'll have one more person in that school that hates you.

*JACKSON goes back into his box.*

Naw, come on, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.

*After a while, JACKSON sticks his head back out.*

**JACKSON:** You're gonna have to go back, y'know.

**DARIUS:** I know that.

**JACKSON:** Can't stay out here forever. You look like an idiot. People think you're afraid.

**DARIUS:** Yeah, what about you?

**JACKSON:** There's worse things than looking like an idiot.

**DARIUS:** Tell you what. Why don't we both go back?

**JACKSON:** What good's that gonna do?

**DARIUS:** Prob'ly nothing.

**JACKSON:** Well, then let's not. Are you crazy?

**DARIUS:** What if I told you from now on I'll try to have your back?

**JACKSON:** You think that's gonna stop 'em?

**DARIUS:** Prob'ly not. But it's something.

**JACKSON:** What if I don't believe you?

**DARIUS:** I guess that's fair.

**JACKSON:** But I guess it's worth a try.

**DARIUS:** Gotta start somewhere. Come on.

*He turns to go. JACKSON stands up in his box, and eventually follows.*

You gonna lose the box?

**JACKSON:** Don't rush me.

**DARIUS:** Okay. But I'm not goin' in school with you like that.

**JACKSON:** We got four more blocks.

**DARIUS:** I'm just sayin'.

**JACKSON:** Don't rush me!

*Lights fade.*

END OF PLAY